

The Library's pioneering work in education has had a great impact in my home State of Illinois. The Library's educational mission, shaped by Dr. Billington's vision, is that young people benefit from learning with primary sources such as Lincoln's magnificent Gettysburg Address, seeing the Founding Father's notes and revisions to the Bill of Rights, and exploring maps and sound recordings to understand history and culture firsthand. As the Library developed and focused its massive resources in ways that teachers could explore and use for their classrooms, Dr. Billington recognized the profound impact of incorporating primary sources into teacher education. Many of us in Congress recognized the potential around this idea and helped create and fund the Adventures of the American Mind, which is now poised to become a national program—Teaching with Primary Sources. The 10 universities in Illinois that have benefited from working with the Library have transformed their teacher education programs. I have seen first hand the programs and curricula that have been created using the amazing resources from Congress's Library to improve teaching in our Nation's schools.

Dr. Billington's energy is unflagging. He has led efforts to launch the World Digital Library, the reinstallation of Thomas Jefferson's Library in the Jefferson Building, and the Library's celebration of the Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009 and beyond. In short, I have valued and look forward to continuing leadership from Dr. Billington. He and his colleagues at the Library of Congress are a tremendous resource to our work as a legislature.

The Library of Congress has benefited immeasurably from the first 20 years of Jim Billington's leadership. We are grateful to him and congratulate him, his wife Marjorie, and his family on this milestone of service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING TOSTAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during my time in the Senate, I have been a vocal advocate of programs that help the nations of Africa improve the living conditions of their citizens. Much of this work is done through dedicated nongovernmental organizations that work year after year on issues of health, literacy, women's empowerment, democracy, human rights, and microfinance lending. Today I wish to recognize one such group, Tostan, which recently won the 2007 Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize for its extraordinary contributions to help alleviate human suffering in Africa.

Tostan means "breakthrough" in the Wolof language of Senegal. The efforts of Tostan have truly been a breakthrough in the West African countries in which it works. Tostan was founded by a University of Illinois alumna, Molly Melching. When Molly arrived in

Senegal in the 1970s, she began teaching literacy through traditional African stories, songs, and theater. Later, in 1991, she founded Tostan, which began offering a community empowerment program that helped Africans address problems they found in their daily lives, while teaching reading, math, health, hygiene, problem solving, and management skills. In 1996, human rights and democracy components were added, with particular attention toward ending domestic violence and the exploitation of children, empowering women, and expanding health and education for all.

The Hilton award recognizes Tostan for its ability to empower African communities, focusing on change from within and from the ground up. Its program has helped reduce infant and maternal mortality, improve community health care and nutrition, reduce female genital cutting, and lower rates of domestic violence in the nine countries where it works. Thousands of women and children have learned to read and perform basic math and have used these skills to start local cooperatives, build stoves, and improve health care. It is not surprising, therefore, that Tostan has been recognized by others for its outstanding work, including by UNESCO, which called it "one of the most innovative educational programs."

Tostan's work deserves to be applauded and should receive our continued support. As one of the world's richest countries, we have a responsibility to help lift up the large numbers of people in our country and around the world who are still living in poverty. Again, I congratulate Tostan for its important work.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last Thursday, September 6, after less than 12 hours of debate, the Senate passed by a vote of 81 to 12 the fiscal year 2008 State, Foreign Operations appropriations bill. I think it was the shortest amount of time we have taken to debate and pass this bill. I also think that on the whole we can be satisfied with the outcome. It is a bipartisan bill, and while neither I nor Senator GREGG, the ranking member of the subcommittee who played an indispensable role in getting it done, supports every provision in the bill, that is the nature of the process.

I also know there are things in this bill the administration supports and things they don't like. I would remind them that our allocation was \$700 million below the President's budget, and the President underfunded a number of programs that have strong bipartisan support—the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and malaria, to give one example. I would hope the White House would recognize that we tried hard to fund not only the President's priorities but also the requests of Senators of

both parties. This is, as sometimes the White House needs to be reminded, a government of equal branches.

Senate conferees were named immediately after final passage, and I look forward to sitting down with the House to finish this bill so we can send it to the President for signature as soon as possible.

Mr. President, the last vote on the State, Foreign Operations bill did not occur until late at night, and Senators were anxious to go home. I want to take this opportunity to again thank Senator GREGG and his staff, Paul Grove, minority clerk for the subcommittee, whose good humor and penchant for thoroughness and bipartisanship have served the committee extremely well. I also want to thank Michele Wymer, who joined the subcommittee's minority staff this year. Michele has been a pleasure to work with. She did a superb job last week on the floor keeping track of the flurry of amendments.

On the majority side, I want to thank Kate Eltrich, who for the past 5 years has handled the State Department Operations appropriations. Kate's budgetary skills, dating from her time at OMB during the Clinton administration, are a great asset to the subcommittee. She has done an excellent job and is someone whose judgment I have great confidence in. Nikole Manatt joined the subcommittee staff earlier this year, and she has already distinguished herself as energetic, willing and capable of taking on any project, and is a pleasure to work with. J.P. Dowd, my legislative director, spent most of last Thursday on the Senate floor helping out in more ways than I can count. I want to thank Tim Rieser, the majority clerk, who has worked for the Senate for 22 years, either as a staff member in my office or, since 1989, for the Appropriations Committee. Tim was my lead staff member on this bill. Tim and Paul Grove have worked together to draft these bills year after year, and to deal with the amendments on the floor. Last Thursday, we disposed of 73 amendments. That is no small feat, and the staff deserves our thanks for the long hours and hard work that made it possible.

Among the other Appropriations Committee staff whose contributions to this process were indispensable are Richard Larson and his outstanding staff in Editorial and Printing, and chief clerk Bob Putnam and Jack Conway, who make sure our numbers add up as they are supposed to.

The funds in this bill support lifesaving programs for the poorest people in Africa. They help protect the economic and security interests of this country and our allies from South America to South Asia. In a world as complex and dangerous as this, we should be doing far more to exert U.S. leadership, particularly in countries and regions plagued by poverty, injustice, and conflict or where the United States is regarded unfavorably or misunderstood. We have done our best